

MY WORLD



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MY WORLD

by

Arthur E. Morgan

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By

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TO MY WIFE AND
COMRADE

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FOREWORD

OUR MODERN world is losing its old religious sanctions, and has not found new ones. It is common for earnest men to say in effect, "Though we do not know why we are here or where we are going, let us keep up courage, and light may come from somewhere. If we are busy with good works they probably will help us to whatever goal there may be." Many disillusioned persons do not expect a way out, and endeavor, by keeping very busy indeed, to forget they have no goal.

An increasing number no longer are driven by an inherited sense of responsibility. To build great character requires great effort. Unless they can be very certain that the effort is worth while, they will not make it."

That attitude is similar to childish impatience. To refuse to play our parts from day to day is like the petulance of a small boy who protests that unless he can grow up by evening he will destroy himself. We are in the infancy of humanity. Time is an essential factor in normal growth for which no intensity of effort can be an effective substitute, and the birth and development of humanity require longer periods of time than those to which the instincts and outlooks of men are adjusted. Therefore, patience and courage are among the first and greatest virtues.

Yet the task is bitter unless intelligent imagination lights the way ahead, and reveals a prospect worth while. I believe our present lack of a satisfactory vision of things to be, is unnecessary. Youth has

courage. Show it that life has great value, and it will pay a great price.

This little book is an effort to point out in what direction, to me, the values lie. It is an expansion of a syllabus used for some years under the title *My World*, with classes at Antioch College. As its unorganized structure indicates, it was written at odd hours.

My thanks are due to Horace B. English and O. L. Inman for reading most of the manuscript; and to Walter Kahoe, a member of one of my classes, whose interest has led to its publication.

March, 1927

—ARTHUR E. MORGAN

Author's Note to the Second Edition

I had hoped that a second edition might not be necessary until I should have had the benefit of some criticism from qualified men, but it has followed so closely upon the first that such criticism has not been possible. Perhaps time will correct that fault. This second edition contains many detail changes and additions, but the substance of the book is not materially altered.

CHAPTER I

My Search for Authority

I FIND it necessary to try to discover in what kind of world I live, and what can be to me the significance of life. I cannot enter wholeheartedly into the struggle of life unless I am convinced that it is worth while to do so. I cannot force myself to adopt some system of belief, regardless of its truth, simply because it would make me loyal and contented. If I have theories about the world and about life, I want to value them because they seem to me to be true, and not because they are convenient.

I respect the belief that age-long experience has resulted in truer appraisals of values than each man can make for himself, and that it is well to accept those appraisals, and to live by them. Should not a man have greater faith in the sum total of human judgment and insight than in his own? Yet, as I look about my world to see what are these universally accepted appraisals which represent the concentrated essence of human experience, I find many convictions tenaciously held and vigorously defended, but I observe among them much conflict and disagreement. In my search for authoritative guidance for my life I am compelled, therefore, to try to understand what are the sources of the convictions, impulses, and purposes by which men live.



Instinct. First, among these sources I see inherited tendencies to behavior deeply rooted in the biological

structure of men and of animals. Man is an animal, and as a rule differs from the lower animals not so much in what he strives to do as in his ability to use intelligence in his undertakings. These animal instincts include the desire to get food, to find a mate, to learn about things, to shun extreme warmth or cold, to avoid pain, to find bodily comfort and security, to travel or migrate. With men and many other animals there is the feeling that it is good to be in the company of others of the same kind. All convictions that are entrenched in the biological structure of men and other animals, I call instinctive.

Through instinct, fairly definite ways of reacting to some of the common experiences of remote times are passed on to us. With animals, and often with men, instinctive impulses are held with complete conviction and with the feeling that one really lives only when they find expression. To a large degree the guidance of instinct is sound, yet men have long been convinced that it is not in all cases to be relied upon, but must be checked and controlled.

Folk ways. Second, merging into these instinctive commitments on the one hand, and on the other into clearly recognized tradition, is a vast mass of manners, customs, habits, and folk ways, unconsciously passed on from generation to generation. Men have such a natural bent toward some of these that only the slightest suggestion of teaching is necessary to arouse them into full life, as with a boy's love of hunting and fishing. They contain a strong element of "instinct." Others are developed entirely by imitation, as with

peculiarities of gait, bearing, or tone of voice, which differ in different social units.

Culture. Third, there is a great body of other tradition which is held to be of value because it represents the consensus of human judgment. This accumulation is the wisdom, knowledge, and lore of society. In some cases it accepts and in other cases rejects the validity of both instinct and revelation as guides to human thought and conduct. Within itself also it contains numberless conflicts and contradictions.

Revelation. Fourth, among the convictions and beliefs that are passed down by tradition from one generation to another, are some which are claimed to have divine authority, being the direct, miraculous revelation of truth to men by a supernatural being. Different groups of men have widely differing and often conflicting "revealed" beliefs, and a thousand men give as many different interpretations of the same "revelation."

Nearly all these systems of "revelation" hold that the guidance furnished by instinct in many respects is deceptive and dangerous. In Christian phraseology the undesirable instinctive tendencies are referred to as "the world, the flesh, and the devil." Where the "revealed" code comes in conflict with instinct, the impulse of the discredited instinct is called "temptation" and action in accordance with it is "sin."

Some men today tell us that they have direct, miraculous revelations of truth, and often they tell us that such revelations can come only to persons who cast aside doubt and take an attitude of implicit belief. If such claims are allowed, they put belief beyond test or

criticism. We feel justified in denying them, because they are made by different persons in behalf of widely varying and conflicting beliefs, because the beliefs so presented often are in conflict with other kinds of evidence, because men frequently misinterpret the significance of their mental states, and because we often find these "revelations" associated with mental disturbances.

Repeatedly in the course of history we find such claims have been used by unscrupulous persons to control the minds of men, and we find supernatural explanations given for events that later are explained by natural and scientific methods as due to natural causes. Most significant, perhaps, is the great and very general lack of unity and consistency in so-called revelations. I am forced to the conclusion that no divine being has spoken in an unmistakable manner. In many cases men have ascribed to revelation the origin of their noblest visions and highest aspirations. Though we are not persuaded of the supernatural origin of these expressions, we do well to seek out and to preserve the good they contain.

Intuition. Fifth, the name "intuition" is given to conclusions which seem to come of themselves without the help of reason. I use this term to include the whole range of unreasoned attitudes and conclusions, from almost instinctive animal inclinations such as the seemingly natural dislike for certain foods, to those rare bursts of understanding by which a scientist or a philosopher comes upon a vision of new truth without the immediate aid of formal reason.

Even higher animals seem to have very small capacity for formal reasoning. Their decisions and convictions appear to come chiefly as unreasoned aversions or likings, or as flashes of understanding. Human mentality did not develop by dropping the mental processes of our animal ancestors, and replacing them by what we know as reason. Man is an animal, and human methods of arriving at opinions, conclusions, and convictions are fundamentally the same as those of other animals, but with this additional element: that whereas in animals the intuitions are comparatively simple, unrelated convictions or impulses, man to some degree has the capacity to test and compare his intuitions, and to arrange them in what seems to him to be logical order.

This additional process is called reasoning. In its elements every case of reasoning is simply a series of intuitions between which it appears that true and necessary relationships are recognized. Reason does not escape ultimate reliance upon intuition. It only reduces great and complex intuitions to their simpler and more universally accepted elements. I may have an intuition that I have a balance at the bank, but it is well for me to check that complex conviction by calculation based on simpler and universally accepted intuitions, such as my conviction that two and two make four. As hereafter used, the word "intuition" usually refers to general convictions and impulses, and not to those minute elements of intuition out of which logical thought is constructed.

This ability to test and correct our complex intui-

tions by our own experience and by the accumulated experience of mankind, and to organize them into orderly systems and processes—that is, the capacity to reason—doubtless is a recent development in the evolution of man. Even the most intelligent of the higher animals have at best only slight traces of this power.

To a very great extent the opinions, attitudes, and convictions of men still are determined by intuitions. The evolution of intuition probably did not stop when the development of reasoning capacity began, but intuition and reason doubtless have evolved together; and human intuition has variety, capacity, and refinement in some directions far beyond that of the animals.

Let me give some examples of intuition, ranging from physical reflexes to spiritual insight. Having learned to walk, I keep my balance by intuition and not by formal reason. After being attacked by a dog when a small boy, I long had an intuitive fear of all dogs. On a walking trip in the woods I may intuitively keep my direction, and not lose my way. I know people who have intuitions of evil spirits.

I decide by intuition that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. A stranger enters the room, and at a glance I conclude by intuition that he is a man of fine character. I search without success for the solution of a difficult engineering problem, and then suddenly a possible answer flashes by intuition upon my mind. I can steal my neighbor's purse, but the intuition called conscience leads me to choose the distant and greater good, rather than the immediate advantage. The prophet cries out "The voice of God came unto me

saying"—and then he gives expression to his intuition of spiritual truth.

These unreasoned conclusions or intuitions are influenced by instinct, personal experience, teaching, tradition, and by reason,—even by the conditions of nerves, glands, and muscles. They are a final result of all the influences that affect personality, and of the texture or quality of the personality that is acted upon. In numberless cases they are of very great practical value. I drive an automobile across a crowded street intersection, and my mind reaches quick conclusions as to necessary slowing down or speeding up, which would be impossible of attainment by formal reason. We rely on intuition in many of our personal and economic relationships. A business man who lacks the capacity for intuitive judgments seldom can succeed.

It is in intuition that man has shown his highest ability to select from the great mass of human experiences those elements, sometimes appearing to reason as exceedingly small and unimportant, which inherently are of controlling significance. It was said of Lord Roberts "that, out of the medley of unanswerable reasons, he had an instinct for selecting those which really mattered, and for keeping his mind close shut against the rest."¹

In its highest and finest form intuition seems sometimes to result in generalizations and ideals of a higher order than those which follow formal reason, and sometimes in the case of genius these generalizations are made from an exceedingly small basis of experience.

¹ HANKIN: *Common Sense and its Cultivation*.

The Golden Rule may be thought a miraculous revelation from God; yet perhaps an unusually intelligent child, living in a home where mutual regard and good will are in control, might unconsciously make the great generalization that the spirit which rules in one family is possible to all men, and that if all people everywhere should be guided by the same motives, human well-being would be greatly increased.

Reason may scorn prophets and seers who claim authority for their intuitions as superior to that of reason, but the judgment of mankind often gives them its supreme loyalty. It will continue to do so, but to a relatively decreasing extent, because in some fields the necessary conclusions of science are pushing man's mind beyond the limits of its old boundaries farther, faster, and more surely than the visions of any prophet; and science has the added value that these new concepts are rigorously tested and disciplined, and made to conform to things as they are. The present conceptions of the astounding dimensions of the physical universe were forced upon us by the calculations of astronomers.

Still, it is through a form of intuition that even these great generalizations of science have their origin. A Democritus or a Jesus today, generalizing by intuition from present knowledge, might bring human insight to a vastly higher plane.

Many people believe that through intuition God communicates directly to the understanding of men without acting through the medium of the senses or the reason, and that this direct experience of God, if care-

fully nurtured, furnishes a sure guide to conduct and belief. Personally, I see no evidence of such communication. I believe that the phenomenon of conscience must be explained in another manner.

I think of intuition as a product, and not as an original cause. A critical examination of the world I live in may have a profound effect upon my intuitions. From my work as a hydraulic engineer my intuitions concerning the probable behavior of water have become different from those of persons who have had little experimental acquaintance with the action of water. The intelligent and experienced psychologist may have intuitions concerning inspiration, revelation, ecstasy, and other mental phenomena, very different from those of the evangelical revivalist. The trained, critical observation of the former will have entered into his subconscious judgments.

I believe that intuition long may appear as man's highest mental endowment, and that every advance of scientific knowledge will make it a more dependable guide. All exact science has for its aim the testing of unreasoned intuition by more definitely verified beliefs. The soundest intuition will be that in which the highest power of imagination and generalization has been educated and disciplined to the greatest extent by the possession of experimental knowledge.

In many departments of life, especially in human relations, intuition generally will make finer distinctions, and will appreciate more subtle values, than analysis and formal reason. Good taste, conscience, the prophetic spirit, vision, and common sense judgment,

while far from infallible, and always needing the discipline and guidance of science, will point out the way. It is only when right conduct becomes so established as to be a matter of intuition, that man is civilized.

I believe I do well to cultivate intuition, and to give it a fair share in the direction of my life.

Science. Sixth, scientific methods always have been used to a limited degree in the everyday affairs of life. If the farmer wants to know whether the cows are in the corn, he goes to see. In that he is scientific. The method of seeing for ourselves, and of basing our beliefs on experience, is as old as man.

But this method also has its limitations. Scientific thinking is based upon axioms, principles, laws, and opinions which in themselves are not revelations of ultimate truth, but are human interpretations of human experience, and so are not infallible. The ultimate bricks out of which science builds its structures are intuitions, and the structures are no sounder than the elements of which they are made. Science contributes to human certainty because it reduces complex and doubtful matters to simple intuitions, concerning which human judgment is in more nearly universal agreement.

Men do not possess the ability to make absolutely accurate and impartial observations, nor the ability to reason faultlessly from their observations; and moreover, both scientists and so-called science often are obviously unscientific. The continual effort of science to overcome human fallibility never is wholly successful, and sometimes instinct and tradition are better guides

than newly formed and inadequately tested scientific theory. It is impossible for all men to have all experiences, and so we must rely on the interpretations of others. Because different men base their beliefs on different experiences, because different minds have differing capacities for interpretation, and because observation often is careless and inaccurate, opinions based upon experience sometimes vary greatly.

Modern science makes the utmost painstaking effort deliberately to eliminate indefiniteness and inaccuracy of observation, and faithfully to record evidence, so that dependable comparisons can be made. The result is a gradually increasing tendency to unity and agreement of opinion among scientific men. It is probable that the development of this new method marks a turning point in human history. Most of our exact science is less than two hundred years old.



Judgment. Thus we see that many sources of opinion and conviction are presented to us as authoritative. The attitude toward life of most men and women is determined by a complex mixture of science, instinctive belief, intuition, theological belief, and other traditional beliefs. This mixture of opinion, belief, and instinct does not possess unity, harmony, or consistency. The clear consensus of human judgment and opinion on which I should so gladly rely, rather than depend on my own weak ability, does not exist. I find that man has discovered no infallible approach to the truth. No instrument of the human spirit is faultless. Instinct, traditional authority, conscience,

intuition, reason, science—all are fallible, and each must be tested by all the others.

We have no single key to final truth and ultimate reality. I must arrive at my conclusions about life and the world by circumstantial evidence. If I am a realist, it is not because any single irrefutable argument has led me inevitably to that conclusion, but because on the whole the weight of the evidence seems to justify that conclusion more than any other. It is a fundamental truth that there is no absolute datum to which all human incentives and beliefs can be referred.

So I am compelled to go about the job myself, to discover what contributions to the guidance of life can be made by each of these sources of conviction; to see wherein each can contribute more than others to the dependable belief or outlook I so much crave. I must come to tentative and arbitrary conclusions as to the weight I will give to each of these factors. Success in doing that is described by such terms as wisdom, sanity, judgment. The successful conduct of life depends upon the effectiveness of this informal process of weighing, judging, appraising, and choosing.

CHAPTER II

The Value of Science

I FIND that the method of inquiry into the nature of the world and of myself, which is commonly called the scientific method, has resulted in a vast increase in our knowledge of the world and of life. It consists of alternately generalizing from experience, and then testing generalizations by further experience through the careful and disciplined observation of phenomena; it includes the stimulation of intuition, and then the checking of intuition by experience. The scientific method tends more and more to bring about universal agreement in belief, and is steadily gaining ground as a dependable way to arrive at opinions and conclusions about the nature of things.

This process is fundamental both to science and to philosophy. Sometimes in philosophy the burden of attention is given to making great generalizations from a small basis of experience, and science disciplines philosophy by continually referring back to experience. Philosophy in turn disciplines science by questioning the validity of the fundamental and universal intuitions which scientists often uncritically take for granted. Wisdom lies in keeping a sound balance in the alternation of having experience and generalizing from it. When a perfect balance is reached, science and philosophy may become one and the same. The term "science" is here used to designate that balanced process.

The scientific attitude is one of humility, and yet of authority. It is not *the* method of approaching truth

but *one* of the methods. It does not offhand despise any method of arriving at an opinion about life; but it does demand that, no matter how an opinion may originate, the evidence be examined. Whenever it finds large numbers of people holding a belief, it will at least wonder whether that belief does not truthfully interpret some widespread human experience, unless it has substantially demonstrated the falsity of that belief, or of all beliefs of that type. It would accept revelation as part of its basis of opinion, if there were adequate evidence of revelation.

In the presence of convictions rooted in the instincts, science also has an attitude of humility. It does not disregard such basis for conviction, but is in agreement with the almost universal opinion of mankind that instinct without control and direction must not be allowed to govern life.

With reference to the general opinions of mankind, as expressed in law, literature, custom, and habit, science also is humble. It demands only that here, too, opinion shall be submitted to the test of the evidence. It sits as judge, and not as advocate, though scientists frequently are advocates. Science seeks those interpretations of experience which are in accord with the nature of things. Unless opinion is disciplined and tested constantly by discriminating reference to the nature of things, the beliefs of men will be in a state of anarchy.

There are certain types of opinion that science has so uniformly found to be without adequate foundation that it has said in effect: "It seems a waste of time

to go into the matter further. A re-examination of the same discredited evidence gains nothing. Until some new kind of evidence is presented, we will tentatively call the matter closed." It has done this toward witchcraft, and inclines to take the same attitude toward supernatural revelation.

So when I undertake to find what kind of world I live in, and to get an opinion of the significance of life to me, I give great weight to the methods and to the findings of science as tending to throw light on the matter. With science as a guide, cooperating with instinct, tradition, and intuition, and with aspiration to discover or to design meaning for life as our incentive, we must examine and remake our views of the nature of the world and of ourselves, and of the nature and the possible significance of life.

CHAPTER III

Teleology

WHEN society has become thoroughly indoctrinated with a point of view, it is difficult even for the scientist to be scientific and to free himself from it, though the facts are against it. The idea that the world was made for man's special benefit and is a place ideally suited to his existence, so long as he behaves himself, clings tenaciously to men's minds, the result of a thousand years of indoctrination. In my work as a flood-control engineer I find the question frequently asked after a catastrophe: "Who is to blame?" The inference is that since the earth is made for and adjusted to man's special use, if it fails to benefit him, he must have done wrong.

Even men who think they rebel against tradition carry over old inheritances of belief. For instance, the standard doctrine of the mass of American Socialists has been that the tragedy of life is due to perversions of human government. Given good government, they hold, man would live in a Garden of Eden. Popular opinion in the matter of health is similar. Disease is assumed to be chiefly the result of personal or social wrongdoings.

Curiously associated with the belief that the world was made for man's benefit, is the contrary doctrine that this life is but a vale of tears. For at least two or three thousand years philosophy and religion have tacitly assumed the helplessness of man to control the universe in which he finds himself. That feeling of

helplessness has played a bigger part in classical philosophy than it is willing to recognize. As an escape from this dismal outlook men have tried to keep up courage, to win contentment, and to find validity for faith and hope, by denying the importance of this life, and by imputing importance to some imaginary type of existence. The Platonists perhaps did this with the theory of ideas, and Christian theology by its picture of a future life to which men will escape from this. Transcendental philosophers and theologians have tried in vain for a thousand years to spin some unity out of this conflicting congeries of beliefs.



There is no prospect for unity of belief so long as men seek the answer by dialectic rather than by giving equal weight to the careful observation of evidence and to its interpretation. Yet these objective methods often are represented as being on the direct road to despair and hopelessness.

Now, though places where we never have been very commonly are pictured as black abysses, sometimes they turn out to be pleasant country. For my part I determined to explore the objective world, to see for myself whether the bottomless pit lay in that direction. I have found, I must say with intense relief from my fears, that flowers are blooming there, and that as I look back upon the orthodox and conventional country from which I came, it is that which seems to me to be the region of hobgoblins and fears and vague dreads. I feel myself now to be on solid ground, which will not vanish from under my feet if I examine it

closely. The sun shines, and I can see the lay of the land. On one side are rocky cliffs to avoid, and on the other the Slough of Despond; but the sun shines, and I can see my way. Nor am I frightened by the philosopher's suggestion that I live in a world of appearance and immateriality. Even granting that to be true, appearance in the philosophical sense is so consistent and enduring that I take no risk in dealing with it as I would with reality.

I started out on this objective examination of the world and of life with the grim determination that I would recognize the facts, even if they should lead me to destruction. When I find, therefore, that the meaning of life and of the world is not restricted for me, but is enlarged; that instead of despair I find renewed and greater hope, I am more than glad that I started, and am anxious to send back word that the trip is worth while.

I am aware of the tremendous pressure of the instinctive temperament of man to direct his thoughts to the conclusion that life is good, and this pressure may have led me to too favorable conclusions. I have done my best to go straight, and I am well content.

CHAPTER IV

My Place in the Physical World

OUR earth is an inconceivably small part of the universe. If the entire Atlantic Ocean from Arctic to Antarctic can be imagined to be one thousand miles deep, and to represent roughly a three-dimensional "map" of the universe, with the heavenly bodies distributed through it in their relative positions and in true proportion, in that map our earth would be a minute speck, too small to be seen by the naked eye.¹ We are informed that numberless other "universes" probably exist, so far away that to reproduce them on the same scale and at proper distances would require other and even larger "maps," farther away than the moon.

I do not find in the opinions of astronomers any suggestions that our earth has had in the past or is likely to have in the future any different kind of history than other heavenly bodies might have, though among the millions that exist probably not more than a small proportion could now support life as we know it. As I see it, our earth is an infinitesimal part of creation, though it does not by any means follow that it is an inconsequential part. All the evidence seems to indicate that our solar system is essentially similar to many others, is governed by the same laws, and is experiencing the same evolutionary processes, probably leading to gradual maturity and decay, or loss of heat.

I see no evidence that the universe or any part of it

¹ Assuming our universe or "galaxy" to be 300,000 light years in greatest diameter and that the smallest object visible to the naked eye would be an illuminated white particle 1-100,000 of an inch in diameter, on a field of black.

was created for the special benefit of man, or that any providence intervenes to protect him from the exigencies of events, to prevent natural physical laws from acting upon him as upon plants or lower animals, or any other part of creation. He takes his chances with the physical world, just as they do. In so far as he makes effective adjustment, he survives. Otherwise he perishes. Until that cold fact is faced, there is little use of any pretense, even, of looking life in the face.

As I see it, life is a phenomenon inseparably associated with the evolution of matter. It may have originated on the earth, or perhaps, as Arrhenius suggests, it may have come into being elsewhere, and have drifted to the earth as dormant cells, driven by the propelling power of light.

The relegation by theologians of biological organic life to an unimportant place, and the substitution for it of an imaginary "spiritual" life, not subject to physical laws, seems to me to be a vestige of primitive outlooks. The death knell of this older point of view was sounded by Copernicus. Its status today is a very hazy one. People stoutly maintain their belief in the old doctrines, but make entirely new doctrines out of them by their interpretations. It is only when we refuse to define the terms "Heaven" and "Spiritual Beings" that we can use them with assurance. A common habit is to recognize evidence when astronomy is discussed, but to refer to a "spiritual life" when we try to define ideas which have lost their original meaning for us.

Before Copernicus the term "resurrection of the

body'' in the Apostles' Creed meant just what it said, the resurrection of the physical flesh.¹ The present idea of a future life, as something apart from matter, would have been rank heresy to the writers of that creed. It represents either an effort to keep an old dogma which is scientifically untenable, by giving it a meaning distinctly contrary to that it originally had, or the growth of a new concept in the shell of an old doctrine. Similar curious efforts are being made today to adjust old religious concepts to the theory of evolution.

The belief that men are ideally adapted to the world and the world to them, does not stand the test of evidence. Disease is found to be far older than the human race.² In the blind fight for life, for many millions of years parasitic plants and animals have found home and shelter wherever they could. Evidence of tuberculosis, pyorrhea, and various tumors, are found in the fossils of animals that lived even before the age of mammals. There are thousands of diseases characteristic of wild animals, and nearly every wild plant has its parasitic enemies. Disease among men, in so far as it is parasitic, represents this fight of many kinds of organisms to find places to live. There is no evidence that a providence is committed to any one type. There are forms of life, such as green algae, that seem to have a very much more secure hold on life than does man.

Living matter does not annul or escape any of the physical or chemical laws that control non-living matter

¹ KIRSHOPP LAKE: *Immortality and the Modern Mind*.

² MOODIE: *The Antiquity of Disease*.

but seems to have evolved to a condition where additional laws are in evidence. As I see it, human life represents the highest stage in this evolution of matter and life. It, too, is subject to all the laws and to all the exigencies of other life and of lifeless matter, but it has reached a stage of development where the whole seems to be more than the sum of its parts, and where laws are at work which are not in evidence in other forms of life. Just as chemical compounds behave differently from uncombined chemical elements, as life behaves differently from inorganic matter, and psychological from purely physiological life, though boundary lines may be lacking, so it seems not improbable that there may be yet other and "higher" manifestations of law, and that intuition in some cases may suspect or become aware of them before they are discovered or confirmed by scientific observation.

In the circle of life, the sector of man's freedom is formed by a very small angle, but the farther he travels from center toward circumference, the greater range of freedom does that small angle allow. His freedom comes, not by nullifying physical laws, but by transcending them, as each form of matter transcends the laws of more elemental forms.

There seems to be this difference between the action of human intelligence and other manifestations of life, that human intelligence has reached a point where to a steadily increasing degree it can control and direct the course of affairs, and can understand and foretell events. Perhaps the capacity and the spirit to do this determine man's ability to put meaning into life.

Thus man finds himself on an infinitesimally small planet in an incomprehensibly large universe. He is there as a part of the natural phenomena, taking his chance for existence along with other forms of life. There seems to be no special providence watching over him to insure his survival. In some respects the earth is friendly, because he has made successful adaptations to it, but earthly conditions often are adverse to him, since he has neither adapted himself to them nor mastered them.

CHAPTER V

Can Life Have Meaning?

FINDING himself in this position, a man may ask what chance there is that life can have meaning for him. Can he by his own effort increase the probability that life shall be worth while? To what extent, if any, is destiny in his hands?

Leaving aside the methods of the transcendentalists and the theologians, and taking an objective view of himself and of the world, there are certain questions, which, if a man will answer them, will further him in his inquiry.

First: What kind of a world does he live in? Only in so far as he has the answer to that question can he have a sound opinion as to the possibility of controlling that world to his own ends. He gets the answer to that question in a continually increasing degree from the natural sciences. Astronomy has given him a concept of the universe as a whole, and of the physical laws that govern it. Through physics and chemistry he learns the chemical composition, the distance, and the comparative ages, even of remote stars. Through geology the history of our earth is unfolded, and becomes a matter of objective investigation and not of blind speculation. Physics and chemistry give him an understanding and control of his physical environment to a rapidly increasing degree. The application of these sciences to engineering, sanitation, and other forms of human service, provides powerful tools for the accomplishment of his purposes. Biology supplies a key to

the structure and processes of living things, which makes it possible for him to create new species and to turn the world of living processes to do his bidding.

Little by little men are finding out what kind of a world they live in and how to control it to accomplish their ends. And this knowledge is coming to them not by means of revelations from the skies, but by the objective study of phenomena, and by testing all theories by the facts of experience.

Second: Men are finding out what they themselves are like. To this end they are using history, biology, and psychology. Traditional preconceptions are slowly but surely giving way to tests, and gradually the phases of human experience which are claimed by traditionally minded people to be beyond the reach of scientific observation are submitting themselves to measurement and analysis. Man's discovery of his own nature, like his discovery of the nature of the physical world, is furthered by this scientific, objective examination, as it never was by other methods of approach.

Third: It is necessary to have opinions as to what objectives of human life, what fulfillments, what satisfactions, would make the struggle of life worth while. Here again, the objective, scientific method of approach will lead to fruitful results, far beyond those secured by blind adherence to tradition.

Of the objectives which man from time to time has set before himself, which ones are governed by his nature and the nature of the universe he is in, and which ones are more or less arbitrary, the results of accident or of education? The Greek believed that the

very laws of the universe demanded that he avenge a wrong. The Christian who lives by the Beatitudes believes that the very laws of the universe demand that he shall not take revenge. Here it is evident that the feeling of what is worth while is influenced by education and environment. To what extent are human motives so influenced? Is it possible that some of the needs men feel as fundamental, such as the desire or need for personal immortality, are not needs in fact, but also are the results of education, and might give way to other cravings and desires if the world should be looked at in a different way? The strength and the feeling of importance with which a conviction is held does not prove its soundness, nor relieve it of the need for critical examination.

On the other hand, unless a serious and intelligent search is made for necessary and valid objectives, it may turn out that convention and tradition have overlooked some of those which are most essential. For instance, a scientific view of life leads to the conclusion that the fulfillment of human hopes must be a matter of the orderly effort of successive generations, and that therefore the continuity of the best stock through the generations is of fundamental importance. Yet among those who live by and for traditional incentives we find the Roman Catholic Church holding celibacy to be a virtue in the priesthood, and prolificness to be a virtue in the laity, even among morons; the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, while living by the New England conscience, have been but little concerned with the small size of their families; the social reformer has

been content to remain childless while he or she uplifts others, and about half the graduates of some of our most highly regarded women's colleges remain unmarried.

Uncritical reliance upon traditional incentive fails in both directions; it attributes tremendous importance to goals that are immaterial and imaginary, building into people's minds the conviction that life would be a delusion without those satisfactions, while at the same time it overlooks other objectives that are vital to the fulfillment of life purposes.

Fourth: To what extent is it in man's power to control or make over the material world to bring about the fulfillment of his life; or, where control is beyond his ultimate reach, to adjust himself to the inevitable, and so make possible the fulfillment of his most worth while purposes?

The problem of man's ability to control his environment seldom has been fairly examined by philosophers or theologians. As a rule they have accepted as obvious and inevitable his impotence before the physical exigencies of life. So overwhelming have seemed these exigencies, and so insignificant has seemed man, that any discussion of the subject appeared to be without value. These men were quite unfitted for taking a live interest in the matter by the very habit of thinking of the fulfillment of life as coming only in an immaterial existence. The classical attitude of despising first-hand contact with materials has kept philosophers peculiarly impotent and hopeless before the physical world. Fortunately, such men as Watts,

Stephenson, Pasteur, and Edison have not been entirely bound by the transcendental point of view.

It is a matter of fundamental importance that men should address themselves to this question of how far they can master and remake their world. This stone, which was set at naught by the builders, will become the head of the corner. It is only when men do survey the field and get a picture of the material conquest which is possible, that the meaning of life can be intelligible to them. The contempt of the theologian and the philosopher for this subject must pass away.

As to man's ability to adjust himself to material exigencies, the same type of investigation is necessary. In time that problem will be faced in the field of eugenics, as it is being faced now in education and in practical life.

Fifth: Man must reconstruct his mental world. He must come to a conclusion as to what part it plays in fulfilling or thwarting his plans, to what extent it can be remade so as to be in harmony with the real nature of things, and what methods can best accomplish that end.



As to man's present place in the physical universe, while it seems to be a very small place, so far as can be seen it has no immediate cosmic insecurity. Life has existed on the earth for probably one or two hundred million years, and perhaps for much longer. Its probable extension into the future seems to be measured by hundreds of millions of years.

If anyone with an astronomical mind desires to

consider portents of ultimate disaster with the cooling of the sun, he can with that same type of mind reflect that there is an endless selection of younger solar systems awaiting man, and that if the rate of human conquest of the material world during the past few thousand years continues for a few thousand years more, his ability to emigrate may far outrun his need for doing so. He seems no further from that accomplishment now than were his ancestors of a hundred thousand years ago from our modern inventions. Given this power to migrate, there would seem to be no limit to the time available for the fulfillment of his hopes, and a main support of the philosophical pessimist is taken away.

Even on this planet, man will become able to control climate by regulating the amount of heat radiated from the earth's surface. To maintain living conditions it would not be necessary to retain a thousandth part of the solar energy which now reaches the earth and then is lost by radiation. The material evidence leads to the conclusion that mankind may depend upon a permanent and reasonably suitable physical environment for working out his plans.



By the time I was about eighteen years old I had worked out a practical tentative program for my life, which still seems to me to have merit. I observed the birds and insects living their unending routine. I doubted whether they very often dwell upon the problem of the possible meaning of life. If they do they must be baffled, for probably they have not the

intelligence necessary for dealing with the matter.

Through hundreds of millions of years the ancestors of the human family were in a similar condition. For them to have tried to determine the possibility of enduring purpose for life would have been unproductive. Their understanding was not sufficient. The best they could do was to survive and develop, and catch their meed of joy. The capacity to make great generalizations is a recent quality in man, probably not more than one or two hundred thousand years old. Probably it has had its chief development in the past twenty thousand years. At present mankind in some respects seems to be evolving at a very rapid rate, and influences now at work seem to be greatly accelerating that rate.

As compared with any of the lower animals, man has reached a high mental state, but as compared with the quality of intelligence necessary for understanding his world and himself, he still may be in infancy. As a boy I likened my condition to that of one who has been stumbling along in the blackness of night, and who now begins dimly to discern the vague outlines of things nearest him. He observes from moment to moment a slight increase in distinctness. But he is impatient. He wants to see what roads are open to him, and whither they lead. "I must see what the possibilities are," he may say to himself, "or I cannot endure living, and will destroy myself." He would strain his eyes to force them to see clearly, though the light is not sufficient.

Here is the program I then outlined for myself: In this dim morning twilight of life my chief virtue is

patience, for the light is growing, and if I make the most of my resources, either I myself or my descendants may be able to see the way clearly when the dawn comes. In the meantime I can contribute most by saving and developing my powers and the powers of other men. This, in effect, is the attitude of the practical man who disdains philosophy and goes about his day's work; and his intuitive philosophy is far from being unsound.

My generation may not see clearly enough to discover what possible values life has. But I can hasten the day, and increase the probability of others seeing it. I am glad to do that, for the road is very long at best. Whatever desirable goal may be possible, it will be discovered more quickly by the conservation of health, wisdom, experience, and good will. I will endeavor not to waste those qualities. To do so would set back the whole progress of mankind, and make the way longer and harder for all men. That passion to commit one's life to the good of all men, present and future, is the essence of the contribution of Jesus, and is the enduring influence of my early religious associations.

My practical program is thus laid out for me. Yet I crave a longer view. I am going to state the outlook I have achieved gradually through the years, and the possibilities of life as I see them. These possibilities seem to me to be valid and adequate. If they should prove not to be so, at least they will have helped me and other men to find our way through the mists and the dim light of the early morning, to a time when we can see more clearly.

CHAPTER VI

Felicity

WHEN society has become thoroughly indoctrinated with a valid and adequate purpose for life, I find I have made no new discovery, but that in my aims I am at one with men of all the ages.

Important as have been disagreements among men as to the most desirable state of life to be achieved, these have never touched the root of the matter. Universally the condition man has held before himself as the object of his striving has been felicity. The hermit who scourged himself on a bed of sharp nails did so in order to win peace in this world and an eternity of bliss in another. Felicity was his aim. The drunkard who tries to drown his care in intoxication desires the same goal. When a man like L. P. Jacks presumes to repudiate happiness as an aim, he replaces it with a striving for beauty, order, and altruism, which are but means for achieving felicity.

If I may by definition give special virtue to the term, I should say that felicity sees life in its entirety. Happiness, joy, or enjoyment, may relate to specific experiences, which in their final effects perhaps may run counter to the greatest good of life. So universal is human experience to the effect that particular experiences of pleasure may defeat the felicity of life as a whole that we have a world of philosophizing and moralizing on the subject, of which *Ecclesiastes* and Goethe's *Faust* are typical examples.

Wise men of all ages have discovered that they must

subordinate all particular experiences of pleasure to the total and ultimate felicity of life. Carlyle rises to the climax of this theme in *Sartor Resartus* when he exclaims, "Seek ye no more happiness, but in place thereof find blessedness." Whitehead gives this principle even better expression: "It is not true that the finest quality is the direct associate of obvious happiness or obvious pleasure. Religion is the direct apprehension that, beyond such happiness and such pleasure, there remains the function of what is actual and passing, that it contribute its quality as an immortal fact to the order which informs the world."¹

Nevertheless, felicity includes, if indeed it is not made up of, particular experiences of happiness. As Whitehead again remarks, "Particular evils infect the whole world, and particular goods point the way of escape."¹ These particular experiences always must be subordinated to the felicity of life as a whole, but they need not therefore necessarily be suppressed. There is no one kind of satisfaction that is good, while others are bad. All are valid and desirable, when they are consistent with felicity for life as a whole. Since no two persons are alike, complete fulfillment would not be identical in any two cases.

Men frequently claim that the types of felicity which they seek are real while others are false or worthless, but always the goal is the same. There are various names for felicity or for various expressions of it, such as pleasure, happiness, contentment, satisfaction, blessedness, joy, peace. Among the several types of satis-

¹ *Religion in the Making.*

factions men at various times have set up as the one real key to felicity, are security, the appreciation of beauty, self-expression, power, inward peace, and friendship. What they mean usually is that one form of satisfaction lasts longer than another, or is less mixed with pain, or makes more impression upon them, or is of a keener sort, or appeals more strongly to discriminating minds.

There are two essentials to felicity. The first is the general absence of a realization of unpleasantness, pain, or defeat. With Buddhism this negative element has been raised to a dominant position. But pain and dissatisfaction are not simple evils. To a very considerable degree the desirableness or undesirableness of an experience depends on the state of mind in which it is received, and the experience which taken by itself is distressing, may lose that character and be desirable when we take a larger view and see the whole consequences.

If I believe that an increase of sharp pain will indicate the development of a disease that will leave me helpless, such an increase may bring distress; but if I discover that it means I am recovering from a disease, and that its increase is evidence of the approach of full health, the same painful sensation will give me joy, and I will watch eagerly for its increase. When a son or daughter leaves home, the parting may be painful or pleasurable, depending on whether the attention is centered on the loss of companionship, or on the promise of a fuller life which the journey makes possible.

Moreover, pain and dissatisfaction have profitable work to do, and until it is done their absence is

undesirable. Their fundamental function is to help us to escape harmful conditions or behavior. We can afford to dispense with them only as we become fully adjusted to circumstances and are fulfilling our best functions. As we come clearly to realize this, pain and dissatisfaction will come to be friendly guides, and not the enemies they now are. We do not yet know to what extent desirableness or undesirableness of experience may depend on mental attitudes.

Second, felicity demands not only the absence of undesirable experiences, but a realization of pleasure and satisfaction. Experiences of felicity may vary in their purity—that is, in freedom from association with infelicity—in intensity, in volume, and in duration. Those objectives are worth most which combine these elements of felicity to make the greatest and finest total.

CHAPTER VII

The Unity of Life

IN MY search for worth while objectives, I need to know what is the essential unit of life for which felicity may best be sought. Failure to ask and to answer that question is a chief cause of human tragedy. What the Christian and certain other religions have long asserted, biology and psychology reduce to scientific conclusion. Biology gives us a new concept of physical life as an endless continuity extending from the remote past into the remote future, and psychology and history indicate that mental and social life also form a single vast fabric. I am not an independent creation, but a bit of the thread or warp of that fabric. Just as the honeybee lives according to its nature, and in harmony with the facts of life, when it lives not for itself alone, but for the whole hive; so I live according to my nature, and in harmony with the facts of life, when I see myself not as an isolated person, but as part of the whole fabric of life, and see the good or ill of the whole as my own good or ill. Altruism and patriotism long have recognized this.

Felicity as an aim, with my individual self as the unit to be considered, becomes a monstrous thing, whether represented by the ascetic who tortures himself in order to get to heaven, regardless of the needs of his fellow men; or by the degenerate Epicurean who gratifies his immediate personal desires, regardless of the results to himself, his fellows, or to generations to come. Only when felicity is seen in relation to the

whole of life, present and future, does it become adequate as an objective for human effort and aspiration.

It is entirely possible, and, I believe, desirable, that this view of the unity of all life, affirmed by religious men and demonstrated by biology, history, and psychology, shall come to fire the imaginations and stimulate the emotions of men, and furnish the standard of measurement for all their concepts of felicity. Controlled by such a standard, a man will not take satisfaction in any experience which, though temporarily gratifying to him, will reduce or tend to mar the felicity of life as a whole. The man to whom this larger view does not appeal will be a less desirable citizen, and will find less reason for applying himself wholeheartedly to the conquest of life. He will ultimately become obsolete, perhaps with the help of the rest of society.

Morality is simply that conduct of life which is good in the light of all its consequences. An immoral act is one which, while perhaps good in some of its immediate results, yet in its total and ultimate effect tends to run counter to the good of life as a whole. Morality was born when men began to realize that to follow their impulses often led them to choose the immediate good rather than the ultimately greater good.

There are in men strong natural tendencies in harmony with the view of the unity of life, though these have grown up in a haphazard way. The impulse to family loyalty is a fully established fact. It puts the object of felicity outside one's own body. Patriotism — "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my

country"—takes in a larger group. Religious altruism goes further, while the philosophic hunger for an inclusive purpose also is a reality. We do not have to create new motives in men to make the whole of life the object of felicity. We have only to educate and encourage some existing tendencies, and to bring balance and proportion among them.

As we begin to consider the effectiveness of various types of satisfactions to contribute to the felicity of life as a whole, we observe great differences. The desire for revenge may be strong, yet the contribution it can make to the total of felicity may be very slight. If the process of discrimination should be carried to a perfect conclusion, we should in every case make choices which would most nearly bring about the greatest total felicity for all time to come.

In the effort to achieve this condition, we come to develop a singleness of purpose and policy which gives control and direction to all our acts, and to our lives. Most of our pleasures will be incidental to this main end, and not ends in themselves. The great underlying felicity of life will come from the satisfaction of living by this all-controlling principle; but incidentally the special experiences of felicity will increase enormously, because life will develop unity and harmony.

CHAPTER VIII

What Experiences Tend to Promote Felicity?

PHILOSOPHERS long have striven to find some central desire toward the satisfaction of which all men's cravings are directed. These central wants are variously described as the desire for inward peace, the will to power, the will to survive, the desire for individuality, the desire to know the truth. The statement of ultimate desire which most appeals to me is that attributed to Jesus—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." It is the desire for more abundant life, for greater unity, order, and harmony, as well as for greater volume and intensity. I can see no benefit but enormous harm in fixing upon some single phase of life and enlarging it to the status of central and dominant value. The habit of doing that has wrought much confusion in religion and philosophy.

The unity of life is a circle of vast circumference. The short arcs of that circumference which we see often appear to be only straight lines, with no apparent unity of direction. Sometimes their unity is perceived first by faith and intuition, and only later by measurement.

The desire for more abundant life is the craving to grow, the desire that more and more of the energy of the world shall flow through us, be transformed, and be given type and direction by our life; that more and more of the matter of existence shall be included in the organism which is the carrier of this energy (even

though our usual concepts of matter and energy are erroneous, this rough statement is not robbed of its purpose); and that this organization shall become of increasingly higher order, more complex, more understandable, more orderly, and more harmonious.

Different people will be stimulated by different types of pleasure. The cruder the man, the narrower will be the range of experiences that will appeal to him. There is no type of happiness which is "true happiness," while all others are false. All pleasures are worth seeking and having, when they do not conflict with the demand that the felicity of all life for all time is the final criterion, and when they do not eliminate keener, finer, and more lasting pleasures. A well-balanced life will have satisfactions of many kinds, but they all will be rigorously subordinated to the building of a good life, and as a result most of them will be incidental.

With wise limitations, to find pleasure in eating and other physical satisfactions is legitimate and desirable. They are the fulfillment of animal wants carried over from primitive ancestors, but often the methods and degrees of physical satisfaction which we allow are ill adjusted to modern life. So great is the tendency to overrate their value as compared with more lasting fulfillments, and to gratify them at the expense of the greater felicity, that wise men everywhere seek their regulation and control as human incentives. Unless one sees his life as a whole, and holds to that plan, the peremptory call of physical desire will bring disaster.

CHAPTER IX

Conscience

MAN'S capacity for giving attention is limited. While it is being exhausted with one object it cannot be given to another. If a man has the habit of being concerned chiefly with physical and temporary satisfactions, he loses thereby the capacity for giving his attention to those that are more universal and lasting.

Instinctive impulses to self-expression are deeply rooted through millions of years of animal evolution. They call more loudly and insistently for satisfaction than do those less firmly established but more refined desires that distinguish men from their nearest animal relatives; and unless these less deeply intrenched, but more characteristically human demands, find some encouragement and protection, they may be crowded out by the primitive appetites.

But they do have friends that come to their rescue. One of these is conscience. There does appear to be in men a tendency which springs into activity when a suitable stimulus is applied, which has for its function the listening for finer but less deeply intrenched wants, and fighting for them against the more primitive and more vociferous impulses.

Conscience probably originated in the necessity for weighing and choosing between conflicting wants. The deer is torn between the desire to go to the water hole to quench its thirst, and its desire to run to the open prairie to escape the wolf which waits at the water

hole. If conscience did originate in this weighing of conflicting wants, it has tended to develop into a capacity for listening to the call of those that are less firmly intrenched in human nature, and which need encouragement.

Conscience, as it appears now, in large part does not discriminate between the greater and the lesser good, but fights for whatever issues are presented to it by intelligence or by social custom. This habit of listening to the commands of reason or authority is almost its outstanding characteristic. Conscience will fight for the most perverted and atrocious objectives and will "crucify the flesh" in their behalf, if they have been effectively presented by reason, authority, or custom.

Conscience must be disciplined, informed, and educated in order to be a dependable guide. This fact is overlooked by many religious men who, in their intense desire to find an infallible guide, have looked upon conscience as the final arbiter of conduct. They fail to see that already it is being profoundly modified and educated by casual contacts.

Besides conscience, the finer but less deeply intrenched impulses of men have other friends in religion, social customs, law, and manners. If conscience, religion, and social custom always had dictated wisely, they perhaps by this time would have unquestioned control of human conduct; but so often has their dictation been unwise or even disastrous (as for instance when religion counsels indiscriminate celibacy) that the primitive instincts often have been the better guides, and have

maintained their powerful hold on conduct. Only when conscience guided by intelligence becomes unerring, will it become supreme.

CHAPTER X

Factors of Felicity

FELICITY will not come by the pursuit of any single value to the exclusion of all others, though each person will have some ways of giving expression to his purposes which are especially appropriate to himself. It is worth while to indicate some of the experiences and endeavors which most commonly are productive of well-being.

A sense of the unity of the race is one of the deepest instincts of men, and nothing gives greater or more lasting felicity than opportunity to give it expression. Joy and duty do not always clash. Even giving one's body to be burned for the good of one's fellow men, may be more joy than pain. The deeper the assurance that one's work actually does bring an increase of human well-being, the greater and more sustained will be the satisfaction.

Human fellowship, friendship, and affection are sources of deep and abiding satisfactions, sometimes from the emotional experience of immediate personal contact, sometimes from the indirect fellowship that comes by following great minds in literature.

Few types of experience tend more to felicity than the appreciation of beauty. Differ as we may about the psychology of beauty, its enjoyment in nature and in art is one of our chief resources. The sense of beauty seems to be, in part at least, capacity for a realization of harmony. He who, by the creation, distribution, or preservation of that which is beautiful, helps to enlarge

and refine the sense of beauty and to satisfy aesthetic desire, add positive value to life.

Creative effort, whether on a great or a small scale, brings to some men deep and lasting felicity. The astronomer who discovers new worlds, the explorer who brings knowledge of new territories, the engineer who in some degree masters the physical world, the chemist and the physicist who make matter and energy serve human need, the statesman who creates new and better ways for human understanding and cooperation—all these will find joy in their work, when they do it truly and wisely; and that joy will be greater when they see that work as part of the great conquest of the material and psychological world, which has universal felicity as its goal.

In ways that are less spectacular but no less real, the rank and file of mankind finds joy in creative effort. The craftsman who works skillfully, honestly, and well; the cook whose meals are wholesome, tasteful, and attractive; every worker who achieves excellence in necessary labor, knows this joy.

*“Who sweeps a room as by thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.”*

So much of our lives consists in doing necessary things, that we have learned one of the great secrets of living when we come to take joy in the process, as well as in the end achieved. Whoever takes joy in his necessary work has won a great victory over fate. He has taken necessity and turned it into opportunity. Whoever does not take joy in the day's work is trying to

live a double life, one life of hateful effort to win another of pleasure. For him, felicity generally is in the distance, while for one who takes joy in his work it is in the present. The resource of joy in good work is available to nearly every man.

All these types of human experience promote felicity. But all of them sometimes interfere with each other, and each at some points must give way to the universal principle that the test of an experience is its effect upon the whole of life, present and future. It is the highest aim of the technique of life to learn how to adjust human needs, desires, and necessities, so that the sum total of felicity will be greatest; and it is the business of science, religion, and philosophy to assist in the search for adequate, consummate, and ultimate satisfactions, and to bring them into proper relationship.

I have spoken of the positive element of felicity, that of experiences which give satisfaction. The negative element is just as important. Felicity demands in general the absence of undesirable experience, call it tragedy, despair, pain, disappointment, loss, remorse, or what one will.

The helplessness of man before the overwhelming causes of tragedy has been deeply impressed on the mind of the race, and is an unquestioned assumption of almost all religion and philosophy. Only recently has man begun to emerge from his impotence, and centuries may pass before his growing freedom and power to eliminate tragedy will become intuitively recognized in everyday life and in philosophy. As that

day comes the whole temper and emphasis of human outlook will change, and human purpose will relate itself to the world of phenomena.

Experiences which tend to bring infelicity vary greatly. Incorrect ideas about the facts of life and the nature of the world are the cause of a large part of human suffering. The savage who believes during an eclipse that the sun is being devoured, the bushman who thinks a spell has been pronounced against him, the pious mother who believes her baby may be in hell because it was not christened—all these and millions of other people suffer from false ideas, and their suffering is as real as any. The man who lives in terror lest he shall die poor, the radical who feels that he lives under the shadow of sinister political powers, the man of money who fears a political upheaval is about to destroy him—these men often suffer intensely without objective cause. Looking ahead through the years, we can see that education and a changed mental inheritance can enormously alleviate these kinds of distress, and in many cases can remove them entirely.

There is another type of infelicity due to abnormal mental states or tensions which in the aggregate represents one of the chief burdens of mankind. Men and women develop misgivings that destroy physical health and mental well-being. There are morbid fears about health, imaginary enemies, dread of particular situations, and forebodings of many other evils. Through mental hygiene the relief of such conditions is becoming a reality.

The biologist and the eugenist have the key to the

removal of deep-seated causes of tragedy, the warps and deficiencies and maladjustments of men, that are biological in their origin. It is the vogue today to say "impossible" to any eugenic project, and this hesitancy is largely justified by the need for caution in a new field. But within a few generations the data for intelligent action may have accumulated, and public opinion will have been subject to change. Through eugenics man has one of the most powerful and far-reaching means for conquering infelicity.

One of the chief causes of infelicity is the carrying over from the past of social attitudes which have outlived any value they once may have had. The war spirit is an example. Primitive men doubtless lived in small groups, with all the rest of the world as enemies. Physical proximity determined loyalty and patriotism. The knave and the saint in my group must stand together against the knave and the saint in yours. Humanity is struggling for world-wide brotherhood in which all men of right purpose can stand together as countrymen. The coming of that day is hindered by the obsolete social tradition of "my country right or wrong."

We must reconstruct our socially inherited opinions on this and other subjects. Human custom, law and tradition is a muddy and polluted stream coming to us from the past—with hatreds, jealousies, provincialisms, suspicions, and misunderstandings, as well as with nobility, discrimination, refinement, and vision. Organized society, and especially education, must be a filter to strain out those parts of our social inheritance

which pollute the stream, and to provide a crystal flow for the refreshment of the human spirit.

Another prevailing cause for infelicity is lack of skill in the organization of government and of other social institutions. Good government requires skillful design as well as good will. There is as much need for invention and organization in the mechanics of government as in industrial processes. Government need not be inefficient.

The spirit of great leadership dies away because there are no adequate provisions for passing on the torch. We need research to promote greater effectiveness in apostolic succession, for always there are great spirits capable of being fired by contact with greatness.

Among causes of infelicity which are not inherent in man's make-up, we have those living enemies of his physical body known as parasitic diseases. Though they have been a curse to him through all his existence, and to his remote animal ancestors, he now has the key to their elimination.

Beyond these enemies which prey upon his own body, man has all the years of his existence been at the mercy of the elements. So great has been his recent progress in the mastery of his physical environment that tragedy from elemental physical catastrophe has become one of his minor troubles, and if human progress is not interrupted, will almost disappear.



Perhaps no greater fact has emerged in all human history than this—that man's helplessness is not necessary. Practically every cause of human tragedy

ultimately can be removed by an extension of the kinds of power he already possesses. When philosophers and religious men fully realize this truth, they will no longer need the refuge of transcendentalism and other-worldliness to save them from the seeming hopelessness of the world they know.

The search for felicity in the past has been largely unplanned and unintelligent—a savage hunt, like that of men who roam the wild woods seeking amid their infinitely varied growth to find a few edible berries; like that of a man who listens to the jargon of noises in the city streets, hoping for some accidental sequence of sounds that will be harmonious.

Instead of wandering the woods for chance discovery of roots or berries, man must plant a garden and tend it; instead of waiting for an accidental harmony, he must compose a symphony and design instruments to give it expression. Instead of hunting for occasional bits of felicity as they appear in nature, he must master the nature of things and of himself, and synthesize felicity.

To paraphrase John Fiske, in all the eons of time it is improbable that chance would have brought together rubber trees and porcelain and glass and iron and leather and oil so as accidentally to make an automobile. If such an accidental accumulation of elements ever had occurred, the result probably would have been a weird vehicle, and not a masterpiece of the automobile builder's art. Even an almost infinity of chance may not accomplish what intelligent purpose can quickly achieve.

CHAPTER XI

The Residual Problem

BUT THERE is a problem remaining. It is customary on the part of nearly every great leader to assume that, by taking thought for himself and for his fellow man, he can increase felicity and decrease infelicity. Our prevention of cruelty to animals, our care of the aged and infirm, the suppression of slavery, the protection of children from exploitation, the search for beauty in music, architecture, and the graphic arts—all these and many other endeavors have that as their aim. Yet it behooves us as open-minded and critical inquirers to ask whether this almost universal human attitude is supported by the facts.

When we observe the occurrence of happiness and unhappiness in the lives of animals and men, we see that in nature they are not ends, but only means to nature's ends, which are survival and increase. Happiness is nature's lure to what is good for survival, and pain a whip to drive her creatures from what is bad. Yet, survival is not proof of any value except survival value.

To prevent starvation, hunger drives animals to seek food, while the joy of the chase and the pleasant taste of food draws them to the same end. Almost the whole range of pain and pleasure seems to have such origin. This great truth is somewhat hidden by the fact that life is complex, and that the instinctive impulses never are perfectly adjusted to biological needs. The lemmings of Sweden and Norway travel in great multi-

tudes when the impulse to migrate seizes them. They swim the rivers and cross the hills, and it is said that if they reach the ocean before the migration impulse abates, they swim into it in enormous numbers and are drowned. That is a typical example of the inability of nature to adjust instinctive drives to all conditions.

Among civilized men the lack of adjustment between instinctive desire and human need is very great. In primitive life a keen inborn liking for sweets was good, because nature seldom furnished enough to supply physiological needs, and a definite incentive to find sweet food was a help. With sugar universally abundant and candy on every hand, this same craving becomes a menace to health. The powerful drives of the sex instinct, carried over from primitive times, are badly adjusted to civilized life, and present one of the major problems of social control. These imperfections in the adjustment of desire to circumstance must not blind us to the fact that with nature, pleasure and pain are not ends in themselves, but means for accomplishing her chief aim of survival and increase.

Now, there is much evidence that nature (to personify the resultant of natural forces) does not care to have her creatures happy, except when happiness will tend to survival. At other times it is even better that they should not be happy, and for very good reason. An animal needs always to be quickly and keenly aware of any condition which may affect it for better or worse, but a state of pleasure tends to absorb the attention and to make the animal less aware of its surroundings, and so less prepared to meet new conditions.

Darwin observed that when earthworms are mating they are apt to remain above ground after dawn, and to be in much greater danger of being caught by birds.

It appears that the normal state of man and of animals, except when meeting some issue, is not happiness or unhappiness, but neutrality—awaiting the next stimulus. Watch the faces and manners of a thousand men and women in ordinary life and observe the neutral state so generally prevailing. The expectation that happiness will continue unabated after the end is achieved is the cause of much disillusionment and cynical pessimism.

How does this fact affect the validity of happiness as a human aim? Is it not possible for men to regulate their lives and their surroundings so that the spur of pain will be less and less necessary, and the appeal of pleasure and happiness be more and more nearly adequate as a stimulus to human action? To take an elemental experience for an example, the pleasure of good food has largely displaced painful hunger and fear of starvation as a stimulus for eating. Cannot similar displacements occur on higher levels? Periods of neutral condition, when men are neither happy nor unhappy, may always continue, but such periods will be neither debits nor credits on the ledger of life.



There is another difficulty in the way of accepting felicity as an adequate goal which is not so easily disposed of. In many cases happiness manifests itself as the reaction from pain or distress. It is as though happiness and unhappiness are the opposite swings of the

pendulum, that experience of happiness comes only as a release from the stress of its opposite.

We can find endless evidence tending to support that view. The parable of the prodigal son is a perfect example. The feast of joy was not for the son who had been safe, but for the one mourned as lost. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." The parable of the ninety and nine is another illustration: "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." As I write this I am revelling in the warm soft air of the Gulf Stream just after a New England blizzard. Does the south sea islander ever experience that thrill?

Is it possible to have joy without an equal amount of pain, any more than to have positive electricity without an equal negative charge? Buddha evidently thought not, and his ideal is peace through the elimination of all desire—through the neutrality of Nirvana. Jesus had a far different picture—of a steady increase in joy and a decrease of pain. Which was right?

The fact that happiness commonly manifests itself as a relief from pain does not necessarily imply that it always must do so. The prime necessity for joy is that there be change and contrast. That which we experience continually we become insensible to. It is the new experience that has power to arouse emotion. Therein lies the beauty of living in the mountains. The perpetual shifting of light and shade and color and mist continually brings new experience of joy.

Is it not possible that the felicity of life may be

sustained by a succession of contrasting experiences, none of which must of necessity be evil or undesired? The succession of generations forever starts the cycle anew, so that ultimate satiety is not reached.

I write in the spirit of intimation and conjecture. Careful physiological and psychological research in time will throw light upon the subject, and therefore contribute to clarifying life purposes.



It is not of greatest importance how many possible life purposes are futile. If, out of all the infinite combinations of matter and energy that are possible, one single program can be designed and executed which will give life enduring value, the battle can be won. To me it seems probable that our choice will be between many desirable alternatives, and that the nearest approach to necessary human tragedy will be in the realization of the many possible joys we must forego because we have not time to experience them all.

At the last I have not escaped risk. My picture of the purposes of life is crudely arrived at, by means of fallible faculties. Perhaps the assurance which satisfies me will prove to be a delusion, as so many plausible and seemingly satisfying assurances have in the past. Perhaps man is but an inconsequential cosmic incident, and perhaps there is no ultimate value in life. With my poor faculties I cannot presume to certainty.

But of some things I have reasonable assurance. I believe that the long struggle of life has produced in man the best creature the earth has known in his capacity to attack the problems of existence with hope of

mastery. I believe that mankind is in its infancy, and that its powers of knowing and doing may increase almost infinitely.

I believe I can further that progress by so living as to conserve health, knowledge, and all resources for those who follow. I believe that to pursue any other course, which would prevent or postpone that increase in mastery, would be pathetic treason to my kind, and would gain me nothing.

I can see no reason why life cannot have great and permanent value, though conclusive proof of that value is beyond me. It seems to me to be probable that the conduct of my own life to some very small extent may determine the nature and degree of that value; and so to the great adventure I gladly commit myself, with mind and heart and all my powers.

And I find on doing so that my portion of joy is not decreased.

CHAPTER XII

Freedom

UNLESS we are mystics and transcendentalists, we believe that all events are natural results of natural causes, and follow natural laws. Thoughts and desires are no exceptions. Even desire for "the good, the true, and the beautiful," so often presented as the highest expression of the human spirit, arises only as a natural and necessary result of natural causes, and like every other result, becomes in turn a cause of further events.

The desires we have and the choices we make are determined by the environment which supplies the stage on which we play our parts, by the experiences we have which suggest the possible choices we may make, and by our natural make-up which determines how we react to those experiences.

All our choices are suggested by experience, except perhaps a few that may be determined solely by primitive animal instinct. Just as dreams are made up of regroupings of bits of experience, just as the great structure of the architect results from the reorganization of elements of experience worked over in his own mind, so all thinking and all imagination consist of regrouping, generalizing, and reconstructing experience. The richer and more varied the experience, the more free from limits will be the imagination, and the greater will be the range of choice.

The make-up of men, which determines how they shall react to experience, is of complex origin. We recognize that some of our choices, such as desire to

avoid extremes of temperature, and our wish for food, follow necessarily from our being living organisms of protoplasm. Other choices we make are characteristic of all normal human beings, and still others are determined by inborn traits of particular races of men, or of individuals.

Our inborn traits are so profoundly modified by environment that, except for the most elemental choices of animals and men, we seldom are able to distinguish between those that are native and the ones that are acquired. We have very little knowledge of unmodified human nature. The total result of birth and breeding is personality, which always is in flux. The character of this personality and the circumstances in which it finds itself determine the nature of the choices we make.

The greater the range of choice, the higher must be the quality of intelligence, energy, and will to take full advantage of it. A low grade of intelligence or morality may suffice for the simple choices of a simple world, but for the bewildering opportunities which exist in America, only the highest types of intelligence and purpose are adequate.

One has a sense of freedom when he feels that the choices which are natural to his personality are not obstructed or prevented by outward circumstance or by inward limitation. If his natural choices are chiefly on the plane of animal satisfaction, if he chooses dearly bought and transient illusions of well-being, such as those that come with the influence of alcohol or opium, if he has not the intelligence or character to prefer more distant and enduring satisfactions over those that are

immediate, but temporary; then the organization of society which is concerned with enduring satisfactions will seem to him to be the denial of freedom.

Freedom requires first, informed imagination which can picture the various choices that are possible; intelligence and wisdom to compare those alternatives, and to know which would add most to the value of life; and finally, the vital energy and desire necessary to guide events and to mould materials to effect the choice that is made. That man is most free who can and does choose the course which is best as measured by its total consequences.

Men may fail of freedom either because they do not know what is good, or knowing what is good, because they cannot gain it. With increase of wisdom and experience, they can greatly enlarge their knowledge of what is good, and, as their ability to manipulate materials and energy increases, they may so order their lives as to achieve it.



It is true that man's outlook is determined by his experiences as they act upon his constitution, but in his desire to escape from his limitations he deliberately designs and synthesizes new and unprecedented experience, for the purpose of refining, informing, and disciplining his desires, and for enlarging his outlook.

To this end he makes clever instruments: the microscope, the telescope, and the spectrograph to transcend the limitation of his senses; devices for the transformation and manipulation of energy, to add power, reach, and cunning to his arm; and he escapes some of the

limitations of time and space by such means as the printing press and the phonograph. Each new experience he creates tends to correct and modify his outlook and his desires, and to lead him again to design more exact and more significant experience. Whether as statesman making a new constitution, as chemist creating new substances, or as musician composing new symphonies, he forever pushes back the barriers of experience.

As the necessary result of this unending, natural process, he gradually escapes from the mistaken, the arbitrary, the limited, the provincial; and he approaches a knowledge and a possession of the good, the true, the beautiful, and the universal. Experience and reflection slowly teach him relative values. In the natural course of events he tends in time to correct his errors, and so the good he seeks becomes more and more nearly his real good.

Gradually he discovers the nature of felicity. Every step in this process is a natural result of natural causes, yet the results necessarily tend to be identical with those which wisdom would seek if endowed with an increasing degree of freedom.

Since intelligent desire for the good, the true, and the beautiful, is a natural phenomenon, arising out of natural conditions, and conforming to natural laws; so, like every phenomenon, it becomes itself a cause of further events—as truly an active cause as is gravitation. And intelligent desire becomes such a powerful and far-reaching cause as seldom has appeared in our world. It directs vast energies and

materials of nature to secure its ends, removes mountains of obstacles, opens the door of choice, and becomes a controlling element among causes, determining what events shall come to pass.

Wise and intelligent desire creates the very possibilities it believes in, by throwing into the scale those elements of cause which become the deciding factors. As a cause of events, intelligent desire can design and forecast the results which will bring about its own fulfillment, and can bring together in unprecedented relationships the conditions which will produce those results.

I have known a chemist, from a desire to discover certain truth, to forecast and to synthesize a hitherto unknown substance, which perhaps never had occurred in nature. Through his understanding of chemical properties and relationships, he reasoned that such a compound would be possible, that it should have certain characteristics, and that a certain very unusual combination of conditions would bring it into being. It may be that in all the universe this association of complex and unusual conditions never had existed, yet the chemist's intelligent desire to know the truth was a more determining cause than all the conditions of existence arrayed against him.



One of the most significant facts of experience is that the expenditure of a very small amount of matter and energy, if effectively organized, may give form and direction to a very great amount. The germ in the acorn determines the character of the oak; the pilot steers the

great ocean vessel; Caesar wills, and whole armies do his bidding; tiny brain cells dream, and a million horsepower of falling water turns its energy into electric current; Jesus speaks, and for two thousand years men strive to do his will. Such are facts of experience.

As compared with the total energy and matter of creation, the energy and matter represented by man's desire for the good, the true, and the beautiful, is almost infinitely small; yet that apparently insignificant existence has the potential power of determining the form and behavior of quantities of matter and energy so vast as to be beyond the reach of imagination. His desire may become the controlling cause in remaking man's environment, and an ever increasing influence in the determination of events. If man uses wisely his present resources, there is no necessary limit to their extension. There resides within himself a cause of events which needs know no ultimate defeat.

Thus, in the domain of intelligent desire, the workings of natural cause and effect tend to bring about the identical results which would be chosen by a wise and good man possessed of a growing degree of freedom. Wise and good! Does this phrase spoil the whole argument? Do these qualifications acknowledge the ironical compulsions of fate? I think not. Wisdom and goodness simply represent the ability and the habit of making choices in accordance with the greater and final good, rather than the immediate and apparent good.

What value can freedom have? If a man were free, what would he do? Would he destroy his own well-

being in order to prove his freedom? Such an act would show him still to be enslaved by some mental limitation. Would he not discover or create values and achieve them?

Freedom is not a value in itself. It is good only because it provides opportunity to achieve values. If we find ourselves in circumstances that bring about an increase of values, then to whatever extent that condition exists, we have the equivalent of freedom.

If a wise man were in a position where only the highest good could come to him, he would have all the benefits of freedom; for should he then become free, he would not change his course. All our revolt against compulsion into taking what is good but expresses a secret conviction that whatever is forced upon us is not the real good—that if given a chance to explore, we could do better. Man's sane desire is not to be an anarchist in his world, destroying in order to demonstrate his freedom; but rather it is to achieve the good. When he has achieved it, a discussion of freedom will have no vital concern for him.

The current of human life has carried man steadily to greater variety of experience, greater range of choice, and greater intelligence in the selection of objectives. Except for temporary relapses, seldom for more than a few thousand years and for limited societies, there has been a gradual escape from the temporary, the provincial, the arbitrary in human outlook, toward the more permanent and the universal—toward the good, the true, and the beautiful in the choice of human aims.

Intelligent desire in time can direct the processes of

human selection so that those elements of the population having the greater capacity for achieving the good shall increase more rapidly than in the past. Never was the range of human choice so wide as in America today, and seldom has selection been so actively at work.

It is a question at present whether good or evil influences are immediately predominant. Intelligent desire should direct itself to the subject, or a great delay in human progress may occur. The chief battle grounds of this fight will be in the fields of education and of eugenics.

The freedom we have pictured is not independent of the necessary sequence of cause and effect. If we had such freedom, then planning and prediction would fail, for there could be no reliance upon natural law. We would live in a world of chaos, and would lose our freedom in gaining it. The only freedom worth while is that which gradually is coming to be within our reach. It consists of increasing range of choice, and increasing wisdom in choosing.

If the fates intended man to be a helpless child of circumstance, they made a fearful mistake when they gave him intelligence and a desire for the good, the true, and the beautiful. Each new vision of his becomes a cause of what is to be. The only ultimate necessity which binds him is the nature of the good, the true, and the beautiful; not as transcendental entities in the Platonic sense, but as the most desirable of the infinite possible adjustments between himself and his world. If this gift is not a degree of freedom, then the difference between it and freedom is not of real significance.

Freedom can exist only as a product of organization, and the higher the degree of organization and coordination, the greater is the degree of freedom. Organized matter has power to take possession of that which is less organized, and to incorporate it into its own nature, or to use it. The most highly organized matter we know is that of living beings. There we see as nowhere else the subordination of the components to the function of the whole. The most highly organized expression of living things is what we recognize as human intelligence, purpose, and desire. The more perfectly organized and coordinated are human intelligence, purpose, and desire, the greater is the approach to freedom.

The unit of bodily freedom is not the individual cell or the hand or the foot, for they cannot depart and do as they please. Only the body acting as a unit can be free. When it does act as a unit, the individual cells achieve a higher type of freedom than any on-celled animals.

So the unit of human freedom is not a man, but the race. Acting as a unit, the race can achieve a higher type of freedom than can the separate individuals. Failure to realize this fact means individual and social tragedy. The wise and good man is he who sees his life as an integral part of all life for all time, and who lives by that vision.

The objection to compulsion in human affairs is that often it enforces an arbitrary and unnatural association, and prevents essential and natural organization from taking place. Freedom is necessary to

organization, just as organization is essential to freedom. No perfect crystal ever was formed by being cast in a mold. It must grow according to its own nature.

Man's intuition tells him that his feeling of freedom is not a delusion. Reason may point to fatalism, but his confidence still lives. Quite probably the degree of intelligence necessary to harmonize his logic with his feeling is not yet developed. If fatalism does in fact obtain, it leads him not astray, but to the same goal as freedom.

CHAPTER XIII

The Job

MAN CAN and must make over his world in all its phases, to the end that the range of infelicity be gradually restricted and the range of felicity increased, that year by year the balance may be more and more on the credit side.

But what about my life here and now? Must I live always for the future? Yes and no. The type of man who is permanently to possess the earth will find more joy in living in harmony with the good of all than in gratifying his own individual desires at the expense of others. A measure of sheer joy for himself in no wise will be inconsistent with the general good. Learning how to be happy requires experience, and he adds to the well-being of the race who develops the technique of sheer joy. The musician who should not himself take pleasure in music could not in his field make a great contribution to the race. A measure of present happiness is not contrary to the path of sternest duty.

Man says, "I will take felicity, which in its biological function is only a means, and I will make it an end. It shall serve me as nature did not suspect." Does not this attitude represent a significant attack upon the tyranny of fate? Who knows what unexpected resources of felicity remain undiscovered, what refinements of human satisfaction are possible? Who knows what biological means also can be metamorphosed, as the sense of hearing which, though biologically it is only a means for survival, has been converted into an

end in the appreciation of music? Perhaps such conversion will be the great achievement of life.

"Yet there remains the function of what is actual and passing, that it contribute its quality as an immortal fact to the order which informs the world." Felicity must be at the same time a means and an end. Whoever takes joy in his necessary work has learned to make it so. It is good that to a proper degree we should turn means into ends, for there is no excellence in work except as it is done with joy, as being an end in itself, and there is no joy in work except as it is excellent.



But what if the world has no plan or purpose? What if there is no overseeing providence that cares for my felicity? I believe that the existence or non-existence of a providence at present is beyond the scope of objective evidence, and that no supernatural agency has revealed it to us, or that our understanding is too dim to see that revelation. But must that question be answered? If purpose has been created for us, that purpose evidently is that we shall work out our own salvation. If there is no purpose, cannot we create our own? And what purpose shall we create, if not that of setting about to work out our own salvation? What, except our own imaginary impotence is in the way? We can design our own objectives, and in the making and striving for them find felicity.

I think I should prefer to discover myself to be in a world without a plan in which my part is pre-ordained. If an omniscient and omnipotent deity has made his completed plan for creation from the

beginning, and is carrying it out according to the pre-ordained program, what am I but his plaything? On the other hand, if, in the fortuitous course of events, or in the working out of a purpose that is struggling into being, mankind has come into a world that is without a finished plan, then can man be, in part at least, a creator of his own destiny. In that case it matters much how I live, for I may be turning the course of fate.

The determinism of the physical world may not bind me, for life is existence on a new plane. It brings about a new synthesis and obeys new laws. The living whole is more than the sum of its apparently inanimate parts. To a degree that I may increase by the ordering of my life, I may be free. The uniformity of natural law is my reliable and supporting environment, and not my prison.

Have I missed the finest things? Am I blind to the inherent meaning of life? Perhaps, but the way of life I have outlined will refine my spirit and clarify my vision, and make me fitter to know the truth. And I am at peace.

So far as I can see, it appears that adequate purpose must be designed, as an engineer designs a complex mechanism; that it will not be discovered already in existence, as Columbus discovered America. Using the material and energy at our disposal, and striving to know the laws of existence, we must so organize and relate the stuff of life that, when it is played upon by the laws of life, the harmonies of well-being will result.

*We men of earth have here the stuff
Of Paradise—we have enough!*

—EDWIN MARKHAM

*I am come that they might have life, and that
they might have it more abundantly.*

*These things have I spoken unto you, that my
joy might remain in you, and that your joy might
be full.*

—JESUS

[illegible]

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